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CIA Involvement Told In Bomber-Export Trial

Missing Defendant Allegedly Said
U. S. Government Agreed to Deal
CPYRGHT

By RON MASELKA

An author-pilot testified Thursday that the defendant missing from a federal court conspiracy trial told him the CIA was involved in a B-26 bomber ferrying operation to Portugal in 1965.

The defense witness was Martin Caidin, of Cocoa Beach, Fla. He detailed conversations he had with Gregory R. Board, 45, of Tucson, Ariz., the defendant who has not been apprehended.

The author of scores of books and articles on aviation subjects, Mr. Caidin said he first met Board in 1961 when they flew three B-17 bombers to England for use in a movie.

Mr. Caidin testified that in early 1965, Board said he was negotiating with the chief of the Portuguese secret police to ship some B-26 bombers to Portugal.

Payment \$1 Million

"Board said the planes could not be sold legally to the Portuguese but the Portuguese were working on an arrangement so they could be sold with the tacit consent . . . of the U. S. government," Mr. Caidin said.

"He said the payment, and he mentioned \$1 million, had to be arranged directly from Salazar (the Portuguese dictator) himself . . . Board said arrangements could not be made unless an agreement was made with the U. S. State Department and the CIA."

Asked if he had any other direct personal knowledge besides Board's statement that the CIA was involved, Mr. Caidin replied: "Not directly."

He said he had discussed the project with a CIA representative and with Air Force intelligence and security officers. "Based on my experience and as a pilot," he added, "you just don't fly these type aircraft out of the country . . . without the complete co-operation of various government agencies."

Flew Over White House

Mr. Caidin said he recommended the defendant John R. Hawke as a pilot and urged Hawke to take the job. Mr. Caidin said he, himself, had planned to fly some of the twin-engine bombers.

During one B-26 flight, Mr. Caidin recalled that Hawke flew in the restricted air space over the White House but received no disciplinary action.

"I found it incredible," Mr. Caidin said. "I have never known of an incident like this before where a severe violation was not filed against the pilot."

U. S. Atty. John T. Curtin cross-examined Mr. Caidin during the Thursday afternoon court session and proposed questioning of the witness today.